

Racing Commission

The core mission of the New Jersey Racing Commission is to govern, direct and regulate horse racing and pari-mutuel wagering in New Jersey. The Racing Commission conducts vigorous oversight of horse racing matters throughout the State to ensure that racing is conducted in a fair, responsible and lawful manner. Commission staff members also provide administrative support to encourage the growth of the horse racing industry through expansion of wagering opportunities.



Off-Track Wagering Moves Forward—

In 2006, the Racing Commission processed and approved three applications for off-track wagering facilities, and those sites were ultimately affirmed by the Attorney General's Office. The first off-track facility to be approved by the Commission was a site in Vineland, Cumberland County. To be located in a former auto dealership, the off-track betting site is expected to open in spring 2007. It will be operated by Greenwood Racing, owners of Philadelphia Park and the Atlantic City Race Course. Other off-track betting locations approved by the Commission in 2006 were a planned New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority site in Woodbridge, Middlesex County, and a site to be operated by Freehold Raceway in Toms River, Ocean County. The Woodbridge site is expected to open in summer 2007, and the Toms River site is expected to begin operating in fall 2007. At the off-track facilities, bettors will be able to wager on horse races simulcast from race tracks around the country. Atlantic City's casinos and New Jersey's four horse-racing tracks already offer simulcast wagering. The establishment of 15 legal off-track betting sites around the state was part of the legislation that authorized creation of New Jersey's account wagering system in 2004. Operational since late-October of that year, the new system allows bettors to place their horse wagers by telephone or Internet.

Investigations, Enforcement Actions—

The Racing Commission took action in 2006 against several parties found to have been involved in the violation of horse racing rules. Principal among the cases was "Operation Horsepower," an investigation into illegal horse drugging that led to arrest and Racing Commission sanctions against several high-profile standard bred horsemen.

The investigation was a cooperative effort between the Racing Commission's investigative team and the State Police Horse Race Unit, and it resulted in several arrests in April 2006.

Arrested was Eric Ledford of Monroe Township, Middlesex County. Ledford, a leading driver at the Meadowlands Race Track, was arrested at the driver's locker room at Meadowlands and charged with conspiracy to rig a publicly-exhibited contest. Also arrested were two employees of the well-known Seldon Ledford Stables – Ryan Dailey and his wife Ardena J. Dailey of East Windsor. Both Daileys were arrested at their home and charged with race-rigging and possession of drugs. Ryan Dailey is an assistant trainer at Seldon Ledford Stables and Ardena Dailey is a stable employee. Also arrested in connection with the case was veterinarian John R. Witmer of Freehold. He was charged with conspiracy to rig a publicly exhibited contest. Statistics discovered during the State's investigation showed that horses joining the Ledford stables – even those with well-established performance records – often posted dramatically improved race times within a few days of their arrival. Horses under Ledford usually improved their race times between one and two seconds, which translates to between five and 10 lengths of a horse.



National Racing Compact—

The Racing Commission is integrally involved in horse-racing-related matters at the national level. In addition to active participation in national horse racing organizations, New Jersey became a full member in 2006 of the National Racing Compact. The Compact is a multi-jurisdictional government agency that processes license applications and fingerprint checks for horsemen throughout the nation who plan to race in several jurisdictions. Racing Commission staff members are involved with several Compact committees, including one focused on license application review for problematic candidates. Also, the Racing Commission adopted rules in 2006 that create conformity with most national medication standards as part of a nationwide effort to standardized race horse medication thresholds, as well as lists of banned substances.

Digital Photo Licensing—

As the result of a cooperative effort involving the Department of Law and Public Safety's Information Technology group, Consolidated Administrative Support Services staff and Racing Commission personnel, the state was able to introduce a new Digital Photo License System in 2006 that streamlines, and reduces the cost of, the process of issuing license badges.

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